

Little Acorns

Acorns Playgroup, Evershot Village Hall, The Common, Evershot, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 0JY



Inspection date	28 November 2016
Previous inspection date	20 June 2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement	3
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- The provider does not ensure staff supervision systems and professional development are effective. The manager does not routinely support staff to improve their teaching practice.
- At times, staff do not challenge children's thinking or extend their learning successfully, to help them make consistently good progress in their learning.
- The manager and staff do not use assessment information well enough to provide all children with appropriate interventions and targeted support to close gaps in their learning.
- The management team does not use the self-evaluation process to good effect, to identify and target all areas for improvements that benefit children.

It has the following strengths

- Children develop positive relationships with staff and settle into the setting quickly. This helps to support children's emotional well-being and they demonstrate sound levels of self-esteem.
- Staff support children to meet their own self-care needs well. This helps to encourage their developing independence and prepare them for when they start school.
- Staff support children's health and physical development well. For example, children learn how to prepare fruits and learn about foods that are good and bad for their teeth. They benefit from regular exercise such as weekly dance sessions and swimming lessons.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage the provider must:

	Due Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ improve the effectiveness of staff supervision to provide targeted support and coaching, to improve staff teaching skills 	20/01/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ raise the quality of teaching to a consistently good level, so all children receive targeted support and challenge, to help them make good progress in their learning and development 	20/01/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ improve the use of information gained from assessments, to plan engaging and challenging activities for children, to target their next steps in learning and help close any gaps in their development swiftly. 	20/01/2017

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- improve the self-evaluation process to identify and target all areas for improvement.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the children and staff taking part in a variety of indoor and outdoor activities, and evaluated the quality of teaching.
- The inspector talked with the provider, manager, staff and children at appropriate times.
- The inspector met with the manager and the provider, and conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector sampled documentation including records relating to children's progress and safeguarding.
- The inspector talked with parents and took into account their views.

Inspector

Rebecca Martin

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management requires improvement

The leadership management team reflects on the effectiveness of the setting, however, they do not ensure improvements are implemented. For example, the manager has identified weaknesses in staff practice but she has not provided sufficient coaching and mentoring to support staff's professional development. The manager does not monitor groups of children well enough to ensure staff meet all children's learning and development needs. Safeguarding is effective. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a child's welfare. Recruitment and induction procedures are thorough and ensure new staff are suitable to work with children. Effective risk assessments and procedures help to keep children safe and well. For example, daily safety checks in the setting are conducted before children arrive and potential risks are removed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

The quality of teaching is variable. Staff use assessments to plan activities that help children progress to their next steps in learning. However, they do not use this knowledge well enough to support all children's learning and ensure they are motivated to learn. Nevertheless, staff generally work well with parents to involve them in children's learning. For instance, they have regular interactions to discuss children's progress and share some ideas on how parents can support their children at home. Children develop their literacy skills. For example, they participate eagerly during story time and use actions to retell stories. They enjoy listening to stories and are confident to choose their favourite books for staff to read.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children learn to assess risks for themselves, for instance they conduct their own risk assessments before going on walks. They know how to keep themselves safe. For example, they independently wipe up spills on a wooden floor and tell the staff, 'It will be slippery'. Staff support children to consider each other's needs and feelings. This helps children to develop respect and understanding for the individual differences of others. Children resolve minor disagreements with minimal support and behave well overall. Children have secure bonds with staff. Staff are kind, caring and responsive towards them, supporting children's levels of confidence and self-esteem. Staff work well with the schools children will attend. Children benefit from this cohesive approach to their emotional needs.

Outcomes for children require improvement

Occasionally, gaps in children's learning are not closed swiftly enough to help them catch up with their peers. Nevertheless, children settle well at the setting and become independent and confident. They develop some useful skills for their eventual move to school. For example, they learn to dress themselves in school uniforms and count to numbers beyond 10.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY281575
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	1061764
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	10
Name of registered person	Little Acorns Playgroup (Evershot) Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP901866
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2013
Telephone number	07985 435 958

Little Acorns first opened in 1984 and re-registered at the current premises in 2004. The setting operates Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8.45am to 2.45pm and Thursdays from 8.45am to 12.45pm. It is open during term time only. The setting receives funding to provide free early education for children aged three and four years. The parent committee employs four members of staff. Of these, three staff hold relevant early years qualifications, the manager at level 4, the deputy manager at level 3 and one staff at level 2.

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